

Neighborhood Influences on Adolescent Cigarette and Alcohol Use: Mediating Effects through Parent and Peer Behaviors

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Abstract

The influence of neighborhoods on adolescent behaviors has received increasing research attention. In the present study, we use structural equation models to specify pathways from neighborhoods to adolescent cigarette and alcohol use through parental closeness, parental monitoring, parent substance use, and peer substance use. We use a national sample with 959 adolescents 12 to 14 years of age whose residential addresses were matched with 1990 Census tracts to provide neighborhood characteristics. We found that for adolescent cigarette use low socioeconomic status (SES) neighborhoods were associated with increased parental monitoring, which was further associated with decreased adolescent cigarette use. For adolescent alcohol use, high SES neighborhoods were associated with increased parent drinking, which was further associated with increased adolescent alcohol use. Low SES neighborhoods were associated with increased parental monitoring and increased peer drinking, which were in turn associated with decreased and increased adolescent alcohol use, respectively.